



Fresh Produce Sales Up 33.9% Amid Growing Number of COVID-19 Cases

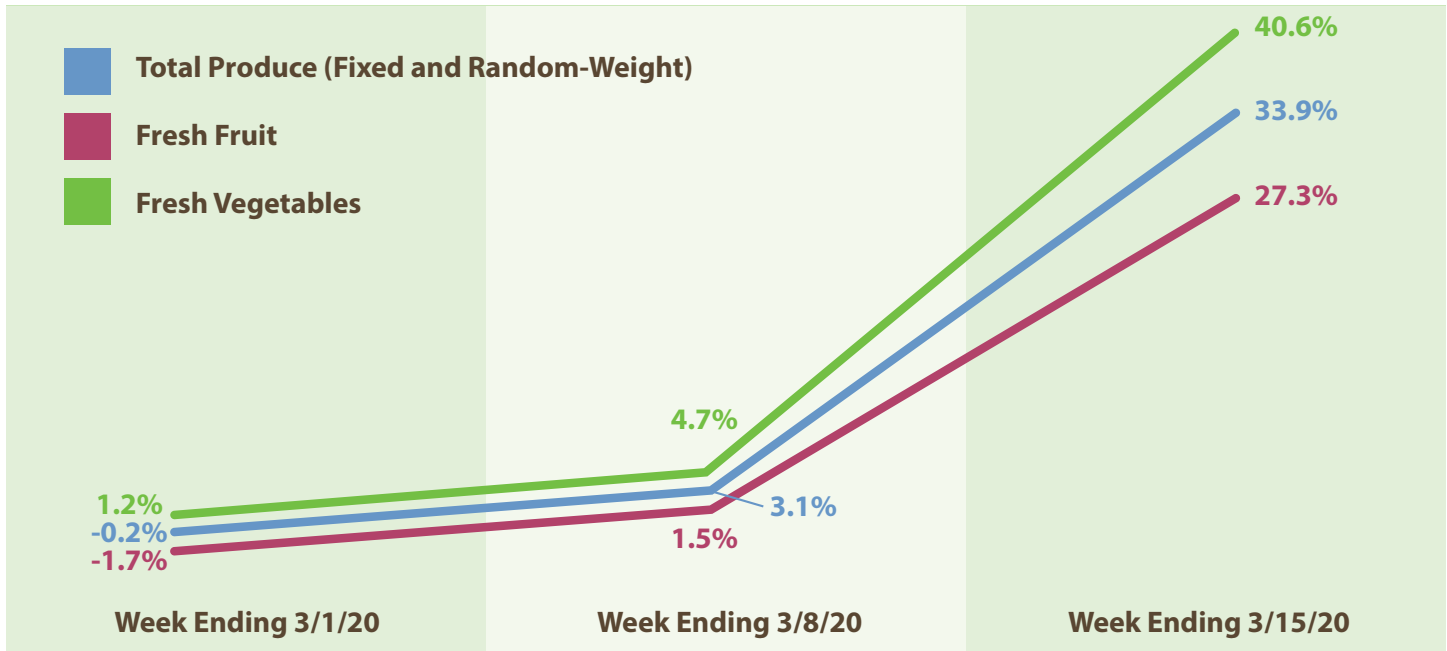
“As coronavirus social distancing measures are tightening and the number of confirmed cases are growing, retail sales are surging.”

– Anne-Marie Roerink

By: Anne-Marie Roerink, 210 Analytics LLC

As coronavirus social distancing measures are tightening and the number of confirmed cases are growing, retail sales are surging. Shoppers are stocking up on staples and fresh foods. 210 Analytics analyzed the sales results, provided by IRI. Total store sales increased 62.5% over the week ending March 15, with edibles increasing 77.8%. Whereas at the onset of the COVID-19 crisis in the U.S. shoppers stocked up on paper goods, hand sanitizers and cleaning supplies, shoppers were in the mindset to stock up on food the week of March 15. Boosted by an increase of 76.9% in meat, the total perimeter increased 44.9%, whereas total produce sales increased by more than one-third. Vegetables were up nearly 41% over 2019 and added \$242.2 million versus the comparable week in 2019. Fruits gained 27% over the week of March 15, which translated into an additional \$150.2 million.

Produce sales amid COVID-19



Source: IRI, Total US, MULO, week ending per graph.

According to Jonna Parker, Team Lead, Fresh for IRI, the sales increases are near universal across all fresh produce, both fixed and random weight. “We’re seeing big gains for nearly all fresh fruits and vegetables with incredible acceleration for items such as potatoes, yams, oranges and mandarins. Additionally, shoppers’ stock-up mindset is driving a huge surge in demand for frozen and shelf-stable fruits and vegetables that have longer shelf-life.” Whereas fresh produce gained nearly 34%, IRI found that sales for frozen fruits and vegetables were up more than 100% and shelf-stable vegetables were up more than 200%, for the week ending March 15.

	Sales Increase: Week Ending 3/15/20
Fresh fruit	+27.3%
Fresh vegetables	+40.6%
Frozen fruit	+103.5%
Frozen vegetables	+107.4%
Shelf-stable fruit	+104.5%
Shelf-stable vegetables	+207.7%

In absolute dollars, the biggest produce winners for the week of March 15 were potatoes that gained \$44.2 million, or +71.6%. Lettuce gained \$42.8 million and was up 29.1%. The top five was closed out by berries (up \$37.4 million, or 31.8%), apples (up \$29.4 million, or 36.9%) and tomatoes (up \$27.6 million, or 43.2%).

Source: IRI, Total US, MULO, week ending 3/15/2020

Fresh Fruit

While stocking fridges and freezers are a big part of the sales surge, home cooking and snacking became much more prevalent as well. The week of March 15 saw more school and office closures, increased working from home and some cities/states started mandating restaurant seating to be closed. Sales surges in apples, berries, oranges, etc. are without a doubt related to the desire to eat healthful snacks to build the immune system.

On the fruit side, apples generated more than 15% of all fruit sales and grew 36.9%; oranges generated more than 5% of fruit sales and increased 60.9% with another 50.2% increase for tangelos.

Top 10 in weekly sales	Sales increase for the week ending 3/1/2020	Sales increase for the week ending 3/8/2020	Sales increase for the week ending 3/15/2020	Weekly sales for week ending 3/15/2020
Fresh fruit	-1.7%	+1.5%	+27.3%	\$700.4M
Berries	+5.0%	+10.0%	+31.8%	\$155.2M
Apples	-5.3%	-3.1%	+36.9%	\$108.9M
Bananas	+2.3%	+5.4%	+24.9%	\$75.6M
Grapes	-8.9%	-10.1%	+7.2%	\$66.7M
Tangerines	-6.2%	-2.9%	+34.6%	\$62.0M
Avocados	+3.1%	+6.1%	+27.4%	\$54.8M
Oranges	-5.6%	+6.2%	+60.9%	\$37.2M
Melons	+1.1%	+1.3%	+10.7%	\$31.2M
Lemons	-10.9%	-6.3%	+33.8%	\$18.1M
Pineapple	-8.0%	-1.4%	+16.9%	\$16.9M

Source: IRI, Total US, MULO, week ending 3/15/2020

Fresh vegetables

On the fresh vegetable side, shoppers are stocking up on items with longer shelf life, in particular. One of the most impressive categories were potatoes. Potatoes are the second largest vegetable seller with the highest growth, at +71.6%. The same is true for onions that generated more than \$53 million in the week of March 15 and gained 59.2%.

Top 10 in weekly sales	Sales increase for the week ending 3/1/2020	Sales increase for the week ending 3/8/2020	Sales increase for the week ending 3/15/2020	Weekly sales for week ending 3/15/2020
Fresh vegetables	1.2%	4.7%	40.6%	\$838.4M
Lettuce	3.1%	5.2%	29.1%	\$189.8M
Potatoes	0.3%	6.4%	71.6%	\$105.0M
Tomatoes	9.5%	15.4%	43.2%	\$91.5M
Onions	-1.5%	3.1%	59.2%	\$64.0M
Peppers	-3.1%	1.5%	37.3%	\$53.5M
Carrots	-2.8%	-0.8%	40.6%	\$40.3M
Mushrooms	3.0%	6.4%	35.0%	\$29.5M
Broccoli	-2.3%	2.0%	33.5%	\$26.5M
Cucumber	5.7%	11.3%	32.4%	\$26.0M
Squash	-3.5%	1.3%	43.5%	\$22.5M

Source: IRI, Total US, MULO, week ending 3/15/2020

It is important to remember that these kinds of sales surges are only possible thanks to the heroic work of the entire produce supply chain, from farm to retailer. As COVID-19 related measures continued to sharpen during the subsequent week, it is highly likely we'll continue to see produce sales surge. 210 Analytics and IRI will provide weekly updates, every Tuesday.